

REMARKS

Claims 1-35, 38, 40, and 43 remain in this application. Claims 1-12, 14-18, 20-24, 27-35, 38, and 40 have been amended to define still more clearly what Applicants regard as their invention. Claims 36, 37, 39, 41 and 42 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer of subject matter. Claims 1, 7, 12, 18, 23, 24, 27, 32, 38, and 40 are independent.

Claims 1, 2, 7-13 and 18-26 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent 6,687,742 (Iwazaki); and Claims 27, 28, 32 and 34-43, as being anticipated by U.S. Patent 6,396,848 (Ohta). Claims 3-6 and 14-17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious from Iwazaki in view of U.S. Patent 6,327,046 (Miyamoto et al.); Claims 29-31, as being obvious from Ohta in view of U.S. Patent 6,650,440 (Wing); and Claim 33, as being obvious from Ohta in view of U.S. Patent 6,301,016 (Matsueda et al.).

First, cancellation of Claims 36, 37, 39, 41 and 42 renders the rejections of those claims moot.

Claim 1 is directed to an image communicating apparatus which is connected to a network capable of performing E-mail communication and has an E-mail communicating function. An E-mail transmitting unit sends E-mail data accompanied by an image file. A requesting unit selectively requests reply E-mail responsive to E-mail to be sent when the E-mail data is sent by the E-mail transmitting unit. A communication managing unit manages transmission information of each of sent E-mail data. A control unit updates, in a manner capable of identifying whether or nor a reply E-mail responsive to the sent E-mail which requests the reply E-mail is received, the transmission information

which is managed by the communication managing unit on the basis of (1) an identification result as to whether or not the requesting unit requests the reply E-mail responsive to the sent E-mail and (2) a reception result of the reply E-mail responsive to the sent E-mail.

Among the notable features of Claim 1 are that (A) the requesting unit selectively requests the reply E-mail (see, for example, Fig. 3, and page 13, lines 10-18 of the originally filed specification)^{1/}; and (B) the control unit updates the transmission information based on (1) whether or not the requesting unit requests the reply E-mail responsive to the sent E-mail and also based on (2) the reception result of the reply E-mail, in a manner capable of identifying whether or not the reply E-mail responsive to the sent E-mail requesting the reply E-mail is received (see Fig. 4; page 15, lines 15-19; and page 17, line 25, to page 18, line 1, of the originally filed specification).

Iwazaki, as understood by Applicants, relates to an E-mail system in which, to identify the kind of device on the reception side, the description concerning the capability of the reception side described as an MDN (Message Disposition Notification) message sent from the reception side is used. For example, in Iwazaki, if there is no MDN response from the reception side, it is judged that the reception side is a device (e.g., PC) on which general E-mail software is installed or an internet facsimile device of a first mode. Further, if there is an MDN response but there is no description concerning the capability of the reception side in the received MDN response, it is judged that the reception side is an internet facsimile device of a second mode. Furthermore, if there is an MDN response and there is a description concerning the capability of the reception side in

^{1/}It is of course to be understood that the references to various portions of the present application are by way of illustration and example only, and that the claims are not limited by the details shown in the portions referred to.

the received MDN response, it is judged that the reception side is an internet facsimile device of a third mode.

In other words, in Iwazaki, since the MDN message is used to identify the kind of device of the reception side, the MDN response is requested to all the destinations when an E-mail having image data is transmitted from the transmission side to these destinations.

On the contrary, the apparatus of Claim 1 selectively requests the reply E-mail, whereby it is possible for the user of the transmission side to request the reply E-mail with respect to only the destinations (reception sides) for which the user wishes to confirm that the E-mail was successfully received. Thus, by virtue of the features of Claim 1, it is possible to effectively reduce the wasteful traffic due to many MDN responses which are seen in Iwazaki. That is, it is impossible for Iwazaki to execute such a selective request for a reply E-mail.

In addition, the apparatus of Claim 1 updates the transmission information based on whether or not the reply E-mail responsive to the sent E-mail is requested and also based on a reception result of the reply E-mail responsive to the sent E-mail, in a manner capable of identifying whether or not the reply E-mail responsive to the sent E-mail which requests the reply E-mail is received. Thus, by virtue of these features, it is possible to achieve communication management in a manner capable of identifying whether or not the MDN is requested to the reception side and capable of identifying whether or not the MDN is received from the reception side to which the MDN was requested. As a result, the communication management report as shown in Fig. 6 can be output.

However, as explained above, Iwazaki receives the MDN message to identify the kind of device of the reception side. That is, Iwazaki cannot achieve the update of the transmission information that the apparatus of Claim 1 can achieve.

Nothing has been found in Iwazaki that would teach or suggest (A) a requesting unit which selectively requests reply E-mail responsive to E-mail to be sent when e-mail data accompanied by an image file is sent, and (B) a control unit which updates the transmission information based on (1) whether or not the requesting unit requests the reply E-mail responsive to the sent E-mail and (2) a reception result of the reply E-mail, in a manner capable of identifying whether or not a reply E-mail responsive to the sent E-mail requesting the reply E-mail is received, as recited in Claim 1.

Accordingly, Claim 1 is seen to be clearly allowable over Iwazaki.

Independent Claims 12 and 23 correspond to Claim 1, and are believed to be patentable for at least the same reasons as discussed above in connection with Claim 1.

Claim 7 is directed to an image communicating apparatus which is connected to a network capable of performing E-mail communication and has an E-mail communicating function. An E-mail receiving unit is adapted to receive E-mail data accompanied by an image file, and a detecting unit is adapted to detect control information which requests reply E-mail from the E-mail data received by the E-mail receiving unit. A notifying unit is adapted to notify information which represents that the control information is detected by the detecting unit.

One notable feature of Claim 7 is a notifying unit adapted to notify information which represents that control information, which requests reply E-mail from received E-mail data, is detected (see Fig. 9; page 24, lines 23-25; and page 25, lines 6-9

and 23-25). By virtue of the features of Claim 7, in the case where, for example, an E-mail is received by the reception side, if an MDN request is attached to the received E-mail, it is possible to notify the user of the reception side of such a fact.

However, as explained above, Iwazaki fails to teach or suggest notifying information representing detection of control information.

Nothing has been found in Iwazaki that would teach or suggest notifying information which represents that control information, which requests reply E-mail from received E-mail data, is detected, as recited in Claim 7.

Accordingly, Claim 7 is seen to be clearly allowable over Iwazaki.

Independent Claims 18 and 24 correspond to Claim 7, and are believed to be patentable for at least the same reasons as discussed above in connection with Claim 7.

Claim 27 is directed to an image communicating apparatus for sending and receiving image information through a communication network. An E-mail unit is adapted to send and receive E-mail via an E-mail server enclosed in the communication network, and a memory unit is adapted to store communication management information of the E-mail. A communication management information forming unit is adapted to, each time the E-mail is sent by the E-mail unit, form communication management information of the sent E-mail and store the communication management information into the memory unit. An updating unit is adapted to, when a delivery status notification for the sent E-mail from the E-mail server is received by the E-mail unit, update contents of the communication management information of the E-mail which received the delivery status notification in accordance with the received delivery status notification. A communication management

report output unit is adapted to output a communication management report indicative of the communication management information stored in the memory unit.

One notable feature of Claim 27 is that communication management information of an E-mail sent by an image communicating apparatus on a transmission side is first formed, and the communication management information of the relevant E-mail is updated when a delivery status notification for the relevant E-mail is received from the E-mail server.

Ohta, as understood by Applicant, relates to an apparatus and method of allowing a user to browse the history of relay transmission on a data terminal. Fig. 1 shows that facsimile data is transmitted from a facsimile terminal (14a, 14b) to a destination through the network facsimile apparatus (2, 6). In this operation, the network facsimile apparatus acting as a relay station has an HTTP server function so that the user of the facsimile terminal on the transmission side can know whether or not the transmission from the relay (network facsimile apparatus) to the destination is normally completed, and an HTML file of the communication management report on the network facsimile apparatus is made and set on the HTTP server. Thus, it appears possible for the user who performed the transmission on the facsimile terminal to access the HTTP server of the network facsimile apparatus by using a network terminal such as a PC having a Web browser and thus to confirm whether or not the facsimile data which was instructed by the relevant user to transmit is correctly relayed at the network facsimile apparatus.

In Ohta, when the image transmission is performed through the above relay, it is necessary, with respect to the result of the transmission from the facsimile terminal to the network facsimile apparatus, to refer to the communication management report output

by the facsimile terminal, and it is also necessary, with respect to the result of the transmission from the network facsimile apparatus to the destination, to refer to the communication management report of the network facsimile apparatus by using the Web browser. Thus, it is necessary for the user to refer to the two communication management reports.

On the contrary, in the apparatus of Claim 27, communication management information of an E-mail sent by an image communicating apparatus on a transmission side is first formed, and the communication management information of the relevant E-mail is updated when a delivery status notification for the relevant E-mail is received from the E-mail server. Thus, by virtue of the features of Claim 27, the communication management information generated by the image communication apparatus can integrate the communication management information concerning the transmission between the image communication apparatus and the E-mail server and the processed result on the E-mail server, whereby the user can know the information (e.g., the transmission result) concerning the image transmission which was instructed by the user himself only by referring to the one communication management information.

Such technique and concept of Claim 27 for forming the communication result report such that usability thereof is significantly improved cannot be attained from Ohta.

Nothing has been found in Ohta that would teach or suggest that communication management information of an E-mail sent by an image communicating apparatus on a transmission side is first formed, and the communication management

information of the relevant E-mail is updated when a delivery status notification for the relevant E-mail is received from the E-mail server, as recited in Claim 27.

Accordingly, Claim 27 is seen to be clearly allowable over Ohta.

Independent Claims 38 and 40 include features similar to those discussed above in connection with Claim 27. Accordingly, Claims 38 and 40 are believed to be patentable for at least the same reasons as discussed above in connection with Claim 27.

Claim 32 is directed to an image communicating apparatus for sending and receiving image information through a communication network. An E-mail unit is adapted to send and receive E-mail via an E-mail server enclosed in the communication network. An analyzing unit is adapted to, when a delivery status notification returned from the E-mail server in response to the E-mail transmitted by the E-mail unit is received, analyze contents of the received delivery status notification. An error notification information output unit is adapted to, when it is detected by the analysis of the analyzing unit that the received delivery status notification is a transmission error notification of the sent E-mail, output error notification information indicative of a transmission error of the sent E-mail.

Among the notable features of Claim 32 are that (1) a delivery status notification responsive to a sent E-mail is received from the E-mail server, and (2) the received delivery status notification is analyzed, and, when it is detected by the analysis that the received delivery status notification is a transmission error notification of the sent E-mail, error notification information indicative of a transmission error of the sent E-mail is output. By virtue of the features of Claim 32, even when an error occurs in the process of the server concerning the sent E-mail, the user on the transmission side can receive the relevant error notification without performing any specific operation.

Ohta fails to teach or suggest the above analysis of the delivery status notification and the output of error notification.

Nothing in Ohta teaches or suggests that (1) a delivery status notification responsive to a sent E-mail is received from the E-mail server, and (2) the received delivery status notification is analyzed, and, when it is detected by the analysis that the received delivery status notification is a transmission error notification of the sent E-mail, error notification information indicative of a transmission error of the sent E-mail is output.

Accordingly, Claim 32 is seen to be clearly allowable over Ohta.

A review of the other art of record has failed to reveal anything which, in Applicants' opinion, would remedy the deficiencies of the art discussed above, as references against the independent claims herein. Those claims are therefore believed patentable over the art of record.

The other claims in this application are each dependent from one or another of the independent claims discussed above and are therefore believed patentable for the same reasons. Since each dependent claim is also deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, however, the individual reconsideration of the patentability of each on its own merits is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully request favorable reconsideration and early passage to issue of the present application.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our New York office by telephone at (212) 218-2100. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below listed address.

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